

THEIR BEST PEOPLE

By LAWRENCE DEVINE.

Linfield meant to buy the old house in that remote Mississippi county. He held the option, and Colonel Jarrett had courteously left him in charge for two weeks while he went to New Orleans to sell his tobacco. Linfield was tired of city life; he wanted a good soil for the crops he intended to plant, with hunting for his leisure hours, and enough atmosphere to make his next novel readable. Besides, his people came from the south.

Then there was the girl—a shy, wondrous girl of about twenty years, who took her bounds out walking every day past Linfield's gate. Linfield had been set upon once by Tiger, and the girl's apologies opened the way for an introduction. Linfield learned that her name was Mary Gates, and that her father, the major, and three brothers, lived in the big house a mile away, among the cotton-pickers' cabins.

Once, while they were talking, one of the brothers rode by, and at the sight of him the girl turned swiftly aside, as though she had not spoken to Linfield, yet, as the man rode by Linfield could see that he half-checked his horse, with a frown on his face. After that the girl only offered the least nod.

"Our best people, the Gates," said the only other neighbor that Linfield had—the man who brought the milk and provisions from the town, four miles away. "Real southern gentry, sir."

"Those brothers don't seem remarkably friendly," said the writer.

"Friendly!" echoed the other. "They haven't any friendship for strangers. Why, only last year there was a fellow down here from Nashville, staying with Colonel Jarrett. Miss Mary used to go out with him, and a sort of flirtation sprang up. She got talked about—you know country ways. The brothers came down with guns to shoot him up, but he got over the back fence a minute too quick for 'em. Jarrett and Gates haven't spoken since."

Evidently the Gateses were dangerous neighbors. Linfield was conscious of an increasing interest in Miss Mary. She was a type he had never met before, a primitive survival in these wilds. Next time she passed he drew her into conversation. In the midst of it words were heard, and instinctively the girl darted into the shelter of a high privet hedge, leaving Linfield staring foolishly into the face of the rider as he came past.

Stolen interviews are proverbially sweet, and not many days had passed before both were conscious of their dawning love. But when Linfield hinted at an invitation to the house Mary showed every sign of terror.

"I had a friend last year," she said



"What Do You Think of This, Mary?"

tremulously. "He was only a friend—he lived here—and Jim and Bob threatened to shoot him. Some busy-body saw us talking. Colonel Jarrett and father haven't spoken since. You see, we are very formal in this district. If only we were friendly with the colonel, and he could introduce you—"

The thud of feet against his door startled Linfield out of his sleep. He struck a match and lit his oil lamp. The blows were redoubled. Outside were threatening voices.

Linfield opened the door. A rush of men bore him to the ground. In a trice he was bound, limp and helpless, and staring up into the faces of the Gates men.

"Get his clothes on, Bob," said one of them.

Ten minutes later, having been unbound and dressed, Linfield was conducted at pistol point into the road, where, fastened to a horse's bridle, he was made to jog over the ruts and stones until the Gates house "was reached. The captors led him into the huge hall.

There stood Mary and an old man with a long beard, whom Linfield guessed to be her father. And a little apart, with downcast eyes and clasped hands, stood a man in clerical costume.

"We've got him, dad," said one of the men.

The old man turned to Linfield, and his hands shook with passion as he spoke.

"We've caught you this time, you infernal scoundrel," he shouted. "Thought you'd eluded us last year, didn't you? In these parts, when a man gets a woman talked about—"

"Father," cried Mary in agonized tones, "I tell you this isn't—"

"Silence!" roared the old man.

"When he gets her talked about he dies like the dog he is or—"

"Murder her!" yelled the young men in chorus.

"Make your choice and make it quick!" said Major Gates.

Linfield lifted his eyes toward the blustering girl. If they had said hell or heaven he would have felt much as he did then. "I'll marry her," he said.

"Parson, you may proceed," said the major to the clergyman.

Five minutes later he gripped Linfield's hand between his own.

"My boy," he said, "family relationships are hard things to come by sometimes, but, once made, we hold to them in this part of the country."

There were tears in his eyes as he clasped his daughter in his arms.

"What do you think of this, Mary?" asked her husband, reading the above. "I think it's the stupidest story I've ever read," answered Linfield's wife.

"And you've actually used our names." "I have to, dear, according to the rules of the competition," replied her husband.

"Competition, my dear?"

"Yes. The 'Ladies' Fireside Companion' is offering 20 prizes of a thousand dollars apiece, you know, for the best description of 'How I Met My Wife.' Don't you think this ought to have a chance?"

"Well," said his wife thoughtfully, "it's got sentiment, and it's got atmosphere. But don't you think it is a little improbable?"

"Not so improbable as the truth," answered Linfield. "Fancy, in a whole world full of people, that I should actually have met you that unforgettable morning in the subway."

"I'm afraid we weren't introduced properly, dear," his wife answered. "Were we?"

"Well, you see, you didn't happen to have any brothers," said her husband, kissing her.

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NERVES ALWAYS SUFFER

No Matter What the Bodily Affliction, They Are Bound to Be Involved in the Trouble.

Almost every little or great ailment throughout your system affects your nerves, says a writer in the New York American. Your eyes and liver and lungs and stomach and heart and many other things throughout your system all "take it out" on the poor nerves if they happen to be a bit out of order themselves.

Recent discoveries show that 90 per cent. of nervous troubles are due to other disorders. Eye strain is one cause. Not only those who have to use their eyes constantly, like students and lapidaries and miniature artists and engravers, but city folks who live and work where their vision is restricted, are all sufferers from nervous troubles, more or less.

The eye wants to get exercise as well as muscles. Living in narrow streets and gazing out across little alleys among brick walls, rushing into narrow cars and hurrying into small rooms, all keep the vision down to narrow limits and pretty soon eye strain sets in and this brings on nervous trouble.

And one of the peculiarities of this is that many people will not notice that they have eye strain because the nervous disorders that result will be so much worse than the cause. Eye strain is much less common in the country.

Working in a stooping position, curving the spine, brings pressure on the tiny blood vessels, and this in turn acts on the nerves.

"I get so nervous sitting still," one will say. As a matter of fact, the continual pressure on the spine reacts on the nerves. As sedentary occupations are more common to the cities there is more nervousness from this cause in cities.

Liver troubles bring on quick nervous disorders; city noises in time affect the ears and the nerves are again in for a siege of trouble. Not even at night or during sleep is there complete quiet in the city. Women become irritable because of excessive blood pressure, and again it is their nerves that suffer—also every one else about them is apt to suffer.

Valuable Antiquarian Find.

An antiquarian find has recently been made in the Isle of Orons, a barren, sea-veered spot near Scalloway, Shetland. It is one of the most ancient and interesting gold ornaments ever found in Scotland. A crofter's son observed a brownish-yellow object protruding from a spot where turf had been taken for farm purposes. He picked it up and found it was a heavy, curiously-plaited bracelet of rustle or rude make, and from its weight, seemingly gold. Recently it was shown the schoolmistress of a neighboring district. She wrote the antiquarian society describing the bracelet and suggesting purchase. An offer of \$100 was made, and at once, without further inquiry or advertisement, accepted by the holder, James Fullerton, Hammo Voe, Barra Isle. The bracelet now rests in special case and on special pedestal in Edinburgh museum.

Father Had a Very Good Excuse.

A little girl from out of town was visiting a little Jamestown miss, the Optimist says, and the visitor noticed that no one asked divine blessing before the meal was served. "My papa always asks the blessing before we eat," said the little visitor to her chum. "That's all right," quickly replied the little hostess, who was eager to defend her papa, "and my papa would, too, but he doesn't know any."—Kansas City Star.

Can You Find the Answer?

A farmer asked a blacksmith what he would charge to join five pieces of chain of three links each. The blacksmith answered, "A cent a cut, and a cent a weld." "Let me see," said the farmer, "that would be eight cents." "No, six," replied the blacksmith. It took the customer a long time to see how the two extra cents could be saved.—Youth's Companion.

A Common Quest.

"I say, my friend," called the motorist to the farmer, as he drove up alongside of the field. "I'm looking for a decent road to take me to Squigglesville."

"I'm durned glad to hear it," replied the farmer. "Ef ye happen to find it, stranger, send me a tellygram, will ye?"—Judge.

Conceit.

Conceit loses a man more friends and gains him more enemies than any other folly, perhaps vice, in the world. It makes him harsh to his inferiors and disrespectful to his betters.



THE RESIDENCE OF LORD FAIRFAX AT ALEXANDRIA VA.

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